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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DECAL joins Zoo Atlanta for Educator Appreciation Day

Educators receive FREE admission and \$2 OFF General Admission for accompanying guests

ATLANTA, Ga., (August 28, 2013) – Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning will again partner with Zoo Atlanta as they host the biannual Educator Appreciation Day on **Saturday, September 7, 2013**, from 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM. Early care and education professionals throughout the state are encouraged to bring their guests to the Zoo for a day of fun-filled activities and education.

Educators will receive free admission and \$2 off general admission for each of their guests. Please note that educator identification is required. Types of ID include an employee ID with a photo; a pay stub or name badge imprinted with school name or county along with a state-issued photo ID; or a homeschool declaration of intent and a state-issued photo ID. Pre-registration is encouraged at http://www.zooatlanta.org/home/article_content/educator_appreciation_day.

“This is a great opportunity for educators all across the state to come and experience Zoo Atlanta, with free admission for them and discounts for their guests,” said Bobby Cagle, commissioner of Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. “In addition to the great zoo experience, educators can visit the Educator Lounge at the Ford Tent for private animal encounters and a chance to talk with the Zoo’s education staff.”

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Zoo Atlanta will unveil its new Cases Conservation, the Zoo's new teacher loan boxes designed for students in Pre-K through 7th grade. In addition, guests will receive a coupon for 10 percent off purchases in the gift shop and food outlets. More information on Zoo Atlanta's Educator Appreciation Day is available by calling 404.624.5822 or through e-mail at education@zooatlanta.org.

About Zoo Atlanta

An accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), Zoo Atlanta inspires value and preservation of wildlife through a unique mix of education and outdoor family fun. From well-known native wildlife to critically endangered species on the brink of extinction, the Zoo offers memorable close encounters with more than 1,500 animals from around the world. A slate of new up-close-and-personal experiences opened in spring 2012: giraffe feeding, permitting guests to hand-feed Earth's tallest living land mammals, and Wild Encounters, three new behind-the-scenes adventures with African elephants, giant pandas and Komodo dragon.

Zoo Atlanta's award-winning Zoo Atlanta Education Department dedicates itself to fostering connections between people and wildlife and instilling lifelong habits of stewardship, conservation responsibility and appreciation for the natural world. Zoo education programs offer age-specific learning opportunities for infants to adults of all ages, and all school programs are aligned with Georgia state performance standards. Safari Day Camps, NightCrawler overnights, Stroller and Adventure Cubs, Keeper for a Day and Wild Encounters run year-round. To learn how to get involved, call 404.624.WILD or visit zooatlanta.org.

About Bright from the Start

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia's children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia's Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program, federal nutrition programs, and manages voluntary quality enhancement programs.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to www.decal.ga.gov.